

Public Transit **Human Services**



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Coordinated Transportation Plan

Adopted May 24, 2007

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Pima Association of Governments and the Social Services Committee wishes to acknowledge the efforts of all the participants in the planning process to develop the Public Transit-Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan. Special thanks to members of the region's human service agencies, public and private transportation providers and the public for providing valuable input on human services issues.

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Public Transit-Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan

Pima Association of Governments, May 2007

INTRODUCTION

Transportation is a significant aspect of the quality of life in a community. The ability to access adequate transportation options contributes to the ability of community members to be self-sufficient and connect with external support systems. Those with disabilities, low incomes and advanced years face challenges in obtaining appropriate transportation options. Pima Association of Governments, known as PAG, has continually worked to address these challenges by providing information, education and coordinating grant opportunities to meet these needs.

This planning process was undertaken for three primary reasons; first, to make more efficient use of resources available to meet the growing demand for transportation options and services; second, to proactively work with the State's Arizona Rides initiative in response to the Federal Transit Administration's *United We Ride* program, and third, to respond to federal regulations mandating the development of a coordination plan to guide the 5310 Elderly and Persons with Disabilities, Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom programs.

The PAG regional Social Services Committee provided oversight to this process, along with partners in the transportation community from both the public and private sectors. Human service agencies were actively involved in identifying regional needs and developing strategies to meet these needs through participation in meetings, focus groups, surveys and engaging their clients in a dialogue about how transportation options contribute to their ability to connect to the places and people they most care about.

REGULATORY BACKGROUND

On Feb. 24, 2004, President Bush issued Executive Order #13330 establishing the "United We Ride" initiatives. This concept had been developed to improve coordination in human services transportation. A United We Ride Framework for Action plan was developed by the Interagency Transportation Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility, a coalition of U.S. Departments of Transportation, Health & Human Services, Education, Agriculture, Labor and others. These guiding principles provided the foundation for state and local government to develop their own action plans for coordination among and between departments and regional and local agencies. The desired outcome was that federally funded human services transportation systems would reduce redundancies and other inefficiencies providing improvements in time, cost and convenience for riders.

In the fall of 2004, Governor Napolitano formed a working group to develop Arizona's statewide response. Two primary components were conducted: a statewide assessment of funding source

streams and coordination conditions and the creation of an action plan for state agencies with recommendations for regional implementation. From these two efforts, the Governor instituted the Arizona Rides initiative by signing Executive Order 2-0-5-16 on July 6, 2005. A formal council was developed with membership from several State departments, Councils of Governments, Metropolitan Planning Organizations and the Governor's office. This Council submitted the Arizona Rides Action Plan in December 2005 with four activity areas identified: Information Awareness; Barriers and Opportunities Identification; Capacity Building for Coordination; and Plan Coordination. Three primary groups were identified to take primary roles in carrying these areas forward: Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) – representing transportation expertise with a significant program of federal transit grantees serving humans services needs statewide; Department of Economic Security (DES/AHCCCS/DHS) – representing human service agencies managing a significant budget and comprising a complex array of state and federal assistance programs within Arizona's communities; and the Council's of Governments & Metropolitan Planning Organizations, including PAG, as the core local and regional organizing and implementing mechanisms.

Following these initiatives was the adoption of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) on Aug. 10, 2005. This provides \$286.4 billion in guaranteed funding for federal surface transportation programs over five years through fiscal year (FY) 2009, including \$52.6 billion for federal transit programs, representing a 46 percent increase in transit funding guarantees over previous transit authorizing legislation (TEA-21).

This legislation, for the first time, required recipients of three Federal Transit Authority (FTA) programs to prepare a coordination plan as a prerequisite to the receipt of Elderly Individuals and Persons with Disabilities (Section 5310), Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC or Section 5316) and New Freedom (Section 5317) grants. Funded projects under all three programs must be derived from a "locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan" and the plan must be "developed through a process that includes representatives or public, private and nonprofit transportation and human services providers and participation by the public."

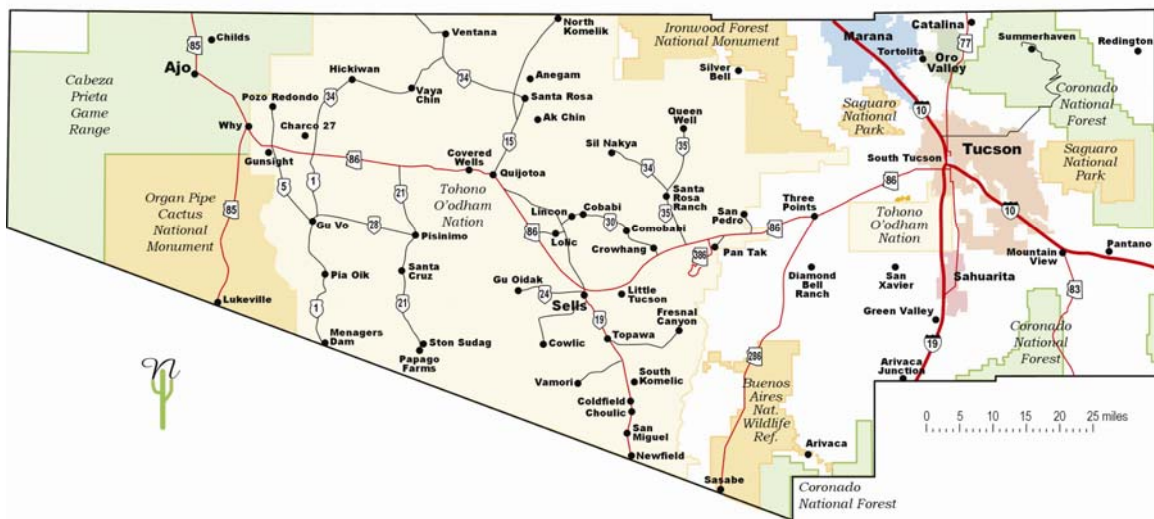
SAFETEA-LU did not specify the required elements of this plan; however, in guidance published in the *Federal Register* on March 15, 2006, and updated on September 6, 2006, FTA proposed that these coordinated plans include the following key elements:

- An inventory of available services that identifies current providers (public, private, and non-profit);
- An assessment of transportation needs for individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes. This assessment may be based on the experiences and perceptions of the planning partners or on more sophisticated data collection efforts, and gaps in service;
- Strategies and/or activities to address the identified gaps and achieve efficiencies in service delivery;
- Relative priorities for implementation based on resources, time, and feasibility for implementing specific strategies/ activities identified; and
- Identification of coordinated actions to eliminate or reduce duplication in services with the development of strategies for more efficient utilization of resources.

REGIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Pima County is located in southern Arizona and covers an area of approximately 9,200 square miles. It is bounded by Mexico and Santa Cruz county to the south, Cochise County to the east, Pinal and Maricopa Counties to the north and Yuma County to the west.

Pima County Arizona



Map 1: Pima County, Arizona

Approximately 70 percent of Pima County is federal, state or Native American owned lands. The estimated July 1, 2006, population in Pima County is 981,280 of which 352,105 reside in unincorporated areas. Approximately 95 percent of the population resides within eastern Pima County. The City of Tucson, the county seat, is the second largest city in the state of Arizona with a July 1, 2006, population estimate of 534,685.

AGE

The median age of Pima County's population in the year 2000 was 35.7 – very near the national median of 35.3. Our region attracts both university students and retirees which contribute to a unique profile with population peaks for those in their early 20s and those over 65. Population in Pima County, as reported in the 2000 Census, was 51.1 percent female and 48.9 percent male. There are slightly more males than females aged 20 and below; however, by age 65 females constitutes 64.8 percent of the population.

Birth to 5 years constitutes 6.6 percent of the population with school-aged children through high school constituting 21.4 percent of the population. College and working-age population, ages 20 through 55, constitute 49.1 percent of the population. The age cohort from 55 to 85 constitutes 21.5 percent of the population with 1.5 percent over the age of 85. Fourteen and half percent are over 65 with 43 percent of those male and 56.8 percent female.

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

The Census asks for data on a variety of disabilities that are defined as limiting one or more major life activities, including the ability to work. In the 2000 Census, 282,478 individuals reported a disability in Pima County, constituting 33 percent of the Pima County population. Of these 11.3 percent reported a sensory disability, 25.4 percent a physical disability, 14.9 percent a mental disability, 7.5 percent a self-care disability, 19 percent reported that they were home-bound and 21.1 percent some form of employment disability. Three percent of Pima County's disabled individuals are between the ages of 5 to 15, 61 percent between the ages of 16 to 64 and 34 percent are over 65. As individuals age disabilities also increase with a larger proportion of the elderly suffering from one or more disabilities effecting their quality of life.

INCOME

Median household income in 2000 for Pima County was \$36,758, up from the 1990 figure of \$25,401. Per capita personal income was \$25,414 in the first quarter of 2002. Average wages for most industry sectors in Pima County are lower than those of Maricopa County, the state and the nation. Our highest paying sectors are in manufacturing and mining, whereas our lowest wages are found in our retail trade and service industries. The lower incomes in the Tucson area are partially attributed to the predominance of employment in the lower wage sectors, prevalence of part-time jobs in those lower wage sectors and to the high percentage of retirees on fixed incomes.

POVERTY

Federal poverty thresholds were \$17,463 for a family of four (which includes two minor related children) at the time of the last decennial Census. These income thresholds, used by the Bureau of the Census, are adjusted for the size of the family and number of related children under 18 years of age. In 1999, as reported in Census 2000 data, 14.7 percent of all Pima County residents and 10.5 percent of all Pima County families were identified as below the poverty thresholds.

Income level, however, is only one indicator of poverty. Poverty is usually determined by three factors: household income, percentage of income dedicated to mortgage/rent payments, and the number of persons in the household. In Pima County, 16.1 percent of all owner-occupied households and 33.9 percent of all renter-occupied households paid more than 35 percent of their income for housing costs. For the hypothetical family of four, at the poverty threshold paying 35 percent of their income for housing, less than a \$1,000 a month remains for all other household costs, including that of healthcare and transportation.

REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT

The City of Tucson is a low-density Western city which has a large number of small and medium sized employers. Outside the city limits, population density is even lower. In rural areas, population can be very sparse. Employment centers and work site locations mirror this trend. There is no single industrial or business district in the Tucson metropolitan area. The largest employers are the University of Arizona and Raytheon.

As of December 2006, the civilian labor force in Pima County totaled approximately 458,100 people, approximately 47 percent of the population. Unemployment has stayed about 4.1 percent in the last six months and at the end of 2006 was slightly below the State at 4.2 percent and the Nation at 4.4 percent.

Pima County's employment profile is significantly different from that of the nation. A much higher percentage of the workforce in Pima County is employed in services, retail trade and government, and a much lower percentage is employed in manufacturing, wholesale trade and finance/insurance/real estate. This reflects the influence of tourism, education and retirement on the local economy. Average wages for most industry sectors in Pima County are lower than those of Maricopa County, the state, and the nation. The highest-paying sectors are in manufacturing and mining whereas the lowest wages are found in our retail and service industries. Most of the available work is in the service industries and retail, with a few jobs in manufacturing.

Employment-Resident ratio's illustrate that most employees work in a different area of the region than they live in. According the Census 2000 data, only the City of Tucson indicates a high correlation between employment and residents with 79.8 percent of the population both working and living within the City's boundaries. However, it should be noted that the City of Tucson covers an area of approximately 412 square miles resulting in potentially long commutes to work even for Tucson residents. The employment-resident ratio for other jurisdictions in the region are: Marana

with 18.2 percent; Oro Valley with 17.2 percent, South Tucson with 11.2 percent and Sahuarita with 5 percent. Ratios for outlying areas in the region are also low: the Picture Rocks area ratio is only 7.3 percent, Catalina Foothills area at 19.1 percent, Casa Adobes area with 18.1 percent and Flowing Wells area at 11.6 percent.

The available information on where welfare recipients have found jobs indicates they are widely dispersed. A report prepared by DES Job Specialists early in 1998 indicated that most individuals were the only recipient placed at a given work site. This trend is not surprising in light of the fact there are few large employers (more than 1,000 full-time employees at a work site) in Pima County.

Employers are distributed throughout the region though there is some clustering of employers, notably in the airport region, the shopping malls, near Northwest Hospital, and along an industrial corridor along Interstate 10, north of Grant Road. Several large resort hotels are located in outlying areas where there is little or no public transit. The Tucson area is also home to a number of telemarketing/telephone support centers, including several in the Tucson Airport area, as well as others scattered throughout the region. Most of these have extended hours or are 24-hour operations. The region has several clusters of casinos operated by the two tribes in the region. These facilities have both a large number of visitors and a large number of employees and also operate seven days a week and 24 hours of each day.

TRANSPORTATION RESOURCE ASSESSMENT

Public Systems

Public transit services in the PAG region range from a major urbanized fixed route public transit system to a weekend trolley service operating on weekends in central Tucson. The public fleet size is approximately 374 vehicles providing over 1.8 million rides each year. Together over 13 million miles of passenger services is provided each year by some form of public transit service. Many of these passengers are low income, elderly or disabled with few other options for transportation.

- Sun Tran fixed route urban service operates a total of 37 routes covering an estimated 505 miles within the urbanized and adjacent unincorporated areas of Pima County. Sun Tran provides an estimated 94.5 percent of all transit rides in the region. FY05-06 ridership was 17,179,275 with a 26.1 percent increase over the last five years.
- Van Tran is a complementary paratransit that parallels the service area of the Sun Tran fixed route service in both urbanized and adjacent unincorporated areas of Pima County. In FY05-06 approximately 428,204 Van Tran rides were provided with a 36.4 percent increase over the past five years.
- The Special Needs Program provides door-to-door transit service to individuals with disabilities who live outside Tucson city limits but within the metro area. Eligible riders include people six years of age or older who live in special needs transportation services areas and are ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) eligible. Service is provided by Handicar under contract to Pima County. In FY05-06 Handicar served 72,425 passengers and has increased ridership by 13.2 percent in the last five years.
- Oro Valley's Coyote Run provides paratransit service within the Town of Oro Valley. In FY05-06 Coyote Run provided 17,507 rides with a 29.5 percent increase over the past five years.
- Pima County Rural Transit provides rural public transportation funded in part by FTA Section 5311 funding. In the western part of the County one route connects Ajo, Sells and the Tohono Nation with Tucson three days a week. Requests have been received to increase this route to five days a week to serve Tohono O'odham living in Ajo but working in Sells. Direct connections to Sun Tran service are available at the Laos Transit Center. The Why

route provides service between the Town of Why and Ajo five days a week. The Ajo Dial-a-ride serves a six mile radius around the Town of Ajo.

In the Tucson region, the Marana route provides service to Marana, Green Acres and Rillito. Direct connections to Sun Tran service are available at Ina and Thornydale. The Tucson Estates route serves the area west of the Tucson mountains, including; Tucson Estates, Branding Iron Park and West Irvington. Direct connections to Sun Tran are available at the Laos Transit Center. The San Xavier route provides service to San Xavier residential communities, the San Xavier Mission and the Indian Health Clinic and the West Valencia businesses. Direct connections are available to Sun Tran at the Laos Transit Center.

Two ADOT Regional Connector routes also provide service in Pima County. These routes are funded using FTA Section 5311 funds and ADOT local funds. The Ajo, Gila Bend, Phoenix Connector provides service to the Desert Sky Mall in Phoenix from Ajo, Gila Bend, San Lucy District, Avondale and Buckeye. Valley Metro/RPTA and Maricopa County are also a partners in this route. The second Regional Connector route in Pima County provides service between Green Valley, Sahuarita and Tucson, including; Raytheon, Bombardier, La Posada, Casa de Esperanza. Direct connections to Sun Tran are available at Laos Transit Center.

Total ridership for Pima County Rural Transit in FY05-06 was 103,604 riders with an 80 percent increase in the last five years.

- Tucson Inner City Express Transit (TICET) operates in the downtown area with 15-minute to 30-minute headways five days a week. In FY05, 143,541 passengers used the TICET service with a 20.9 percent increase over the past five years. New route service connecting the University of Arizona area with the downtown is planned for FY07.
- The University of Arizona (U of A) also continues to operate a campus circulator shuttle known as Cat Tran. It is a fixed-route system consisting of seven routes and 17 shuttles operating on headways of 15 minute to 30 minutes. Over 460,499 rides were provided in FY05 and CatTran provides about 2.9 percent of all transit rides in the region. Ridership has increased 17.4 percent in the last five years. Cat Tran plans to expand services to surrounding neighborhoods, continue to improve connections with Sun Tran and TICET, and extend routes to University housing clusters.
- Old Pueblo Trolley operates on weekends, between the main gate of the University of Arizona along University Boulevard and 4th Avenue to the 4th Avenue Business District. In FY05 over 30,715 passengers boarded the Trolley. Extension of the trolley tracks into Downtown through a new 4th Avenue underpass is currently under design. Based on the outcome of a federally sponsored study, the trolley might be routed through Downtown to the Tucson Convention Center and have a future terminus in the Rio Nuevo Development Area, located west of Interstate 10 and Congress Street.

Private and Non-Profit Systems

Private and non-profit fleets are harder to assess than public transit services. There are several private transit operators that provide daily intercity bus service from the Tucson metro area to cities throughout the Southwest United States and Mexico. Greyhound Bus Lines provides daily service from Tucson to Phoenix and other Arizona cities in southeastern Arizona along Interstate 10. Over 50 buses route through the Greyhound Depot each day serving over 660,000 passengers in 2005. The sixth busiest terminal in the western United States, Greyhound also provides seamless ticketing and connection to Mexican bus carriers for longer trips into the interior of Mexico.

The Greyhound Depot has been moved to a temporary location south of West Congress at Interstate 10 and a new terminal is in the process of being planned and built next to the completely renovated

historic train depot. Amtrak picks up passengers approximately three times per week at the centrally located Train Depot.

Arizona Shuttle Service fills a smaller niche in the transit market by providing 18 non-stop daily service from Tucson to Sky Harbor Airport in Phoenix. Over 170,000 passengers annually are served on the Tucson-Phoenix route. Arizona Shuttle Service also provides package delivery and charter/tour services. Other private and non-profit transportation services available in the region include:

- Friends in Deed, operated through volunteers in the Green Valley area.
- Neighbors Care, operated through a coalition of interfaith communities and agencies.
- Taxis available by contacting a private service, frequently private pay but there are vouchers available through a few agencies. There are approximately 11 private taxi-cab companies serving the greater Tucson area.
- Private company vans operated by resorts, hotels and casinos.
- Human Services agency's fleets including a mix of lift-equipped vans, maxi and mini-vans and personal vehicles with mileage reimbursement agreements or volunteer contributions. Survey responses from those agencies that maintain their own fleets (15 agencies) found that combined fleet size for even a small sub-sample of human services agencies to be significant. Agencies reported a total fleet size of 203 vehicles providing passenger service, with 87 of those lift-equipped for wheelchair bound client transport. Passenger capacity was estimated at 1,787, with over 3.6 million miles logged annually providing almost a half million passenger trips annually.
- Van Pool has 17 vans operating in the PAG region, representing 5 employers: Federal Corrections Facility, Indian Health Services in Sells, Raytheon Missile Systems, Town of Marana, and Ventana Medical Systems. In order for the van to be cost effective, a rider needs to have at least a 15-mile, one-way commute (preferably farther) with a relative longer travel time. The average time spent on a vanpool commute was 22 minutes and the average commute distance was 13 miles based on 2005 survey results.

Charter transportation service providers, airport and hotel service transportation providers, black car and limousine service providers and other non-motor vehicle providers (e.g. air flight services) are other types of private transportation services available in the region.

Although transportation services within the region are diverse and serve a variety of population groups, there are unique issues related to each of these modes of service. These issues include:

- Public system providers operate within specific jurisdictional or service area boundaries. Cross-jurisdictional travel may require multiple transfers or is not possible at all. Schedule coordination is limited in scope, resulting in long waiting periods between transfers and increasing travel times for those relying on public transit to meet their travel needs. Limited schedules in non-peak hours or over the weekends limit their usefulness for non-traditional employment trips.
- Nonprofit agencies frequently limit access to their services to eligible clients and are limited to a specified geographic service area. Eligibility criteria may be imposed by funding sources. In some cases, these criteria may be very broad (e.g. persons over 60 years of age) or quite specific, involving third party verification of eligibility.
- Private sector services add considerable fleet resources to the region with the most flexibility in travel throughout any geographic area of the region, can provide door-to-door travel and many provide the added value of personalized service. Established rates, however, limit persons with disabilities and elderly or low income individuals from using

these services on a for-hire basis to meet their daily transportation needs. In addition, the limited ability of these client groups to provide tips, relied upon by the drivers for their income, results in these being undesirable population groups for transport among the private sector.

- Medical facility transport is restricted by purpose and function and often are limited to those obtaining treatment at the facility. It also may be restricted by willingness of the individuals insurance policy, if they have one, to pay for the medical transport costs.
- Faith-based organizations are relatively limited in scale but fill critical gaps in the service network. Typically, faith-based transportation services are limited to those within the faith based network either by membership in the faith organization or served by an ancillary program of the organization. Reliance on volunteers and donations may limit the scope of these services.

TRANSPORTATION NEEDS

In order to assess transportation needs related specifically to human service agencies and clients, PAG held a series of focus groups and conducted a regional survey. Eighty-five percent of agencies providing transportation services reported that their clients had limitations to riding fixed route transit. These limitations included: travel times, restrictions on clients (e.g. probation requirements), lack of funds for transit fares, extremely frail, elderly with disabilities, limited mobility, need for mobility devices, need for service dogs or visually impaired, could not reach stops due to physical problems or length of distance to nearest transit stop, reside outside regular transit service areas, injured or critical ill, use of oxygen tanks, required escort due to their condition or had all manner of mental, physical or emotional disabilities hindering functionality.

Many agencies also reported that their client groups have characteristics that require specific staff training to safely transport these clients or meet their needs for trip chaining (e.g. pick up prescriptions or other medical supplies following a medical appointment). Sixty-nine percent of the agencies indicated that their transportation services were part of their clients complete treatment plan and that their drivers were specifically trained to make the transport time a productive part of the clients day. Supportive listening and communication skills, preparing the client for the activities of the day, training on how to use mobility devices, even singing with clients on their way to their day care program are some of these targeted client activities.

Focus groups discussed needs identified by the full social service committee and prioritized them for the children/youth, adult, elderly/disabled and homeless/low income human service groups.

CHILDREN/YOUTH	<p>Real-time transportation crisis response needed</p> <p><i>Early Childhood:</i> Transport at appropriate times, medical pick-up, parent involvement</p> <p><i>School age:</i> Non-daily needs, medical /dental/ behavior health apps, pre and post school hours of care</p> <p><i>Adolescent:</i> Public transportation for school esp. magnet, extra-curricular activities, part-time work after school/other non-school sponsored after school activities</p> <p><i>Teen-age Parents:</i> Child care, flexibility for school, school age workers</p> <p><i>Post High School:</i> Public transit flexibility, connection between all campuses, emergency transport</p>
ADULT SERVICES	<p>Expanded transit services schedules/routes</p> <p>Increased access in rural areas</p> <p>Local match funding/dedicated source for transit</p> <p>Linkages with Vail, Catalina, Avra Valley/Picture Rocks/Ajo</p>

ELDERLY/ DISABLED	Costs for Operating/Maintenance and Vehicles Rural Options Weekend Transit/Access to Socialization opportunities Medical/Timeliness for Medical Trips and Transport to Specialists Door to Door Services, especially for medical trips Funding for public, private and volunteer services Publicity of transit program options
HOMELESS/ LOW INCOME	Employment now 24/7 for low income clients – Jobs not on current transit routes or schedules Low income working adults maintenance of vehicles More accessibility by bus route, bus stops with less travel times More frequency of buses in outer areas of the metro area

Table 1: Prioritized Human Service Transportation Needs by Service Area

TRANSPORTATION SERVICE BARRIERS

Not surprisingly, given the special populations that human service agencies serve, not many agencies found public transit to be effective for their client groups. Those operating within the urban core of the city, and not serving the disabled or elderly, ranked public transit as very effective or effective (17 percent). However, 56 percent found that public transit did not work well for their clients stating that the major problems were that the routes were not comprehensive enough (92 percent), infrequent schedule (88 percent), inconvenient transit routes (80 percent), unaffordable fare (32 percent), or concerns for safety (28 percent). Comments frequently referenced the timeliness of the bus schedules and the lack of flexibility to meet specific destination needs. Safety issues, both from a security and a medical standpoint, also were serious concerns for many clients. Standing in the heat, without shelter from direct sunlight, was mentioned as placing clients that are frail or on medications at additional risk for serious medical complications. Many agencies use both transit and agency vehicle fleets to meet client transportation needs.

However, although 65 percent of agencies that responded to the regional survey indicated that they maintain their own vehicle fleets in order to meet client transportation needs, this solution is not without its own concerns. Fuel costs are the highest concern with 77 percent of respondents followed by vehicle maintenance (69 percent). Vehicle costs and insurance costs were noted by 65 percent of respondents. Other comments included liability concerns, need for shuttle vehicle funds, operating costs especially for drivers wages and a lack of ability to provide timely rides to meet all of their client needs. Although economies of scale make shuttle vans more efficient (from a cost standpoint) the more clients that must be picked up and transported to varied locations increases the waiting times and transport times. This stated concern is one shared for both public transit and for agency vehicle fleets and some agencies find that using personal vehicles and/or reliance on volunteers work best for their client needs.

Of those agencies that do not provide transportation, 50 percent stated that it was not necessary for them to provide services, 79 percent stated that funding shortages were a constraint, 71 percent indicated staffing level constraints and liability concerns. Fifty-seven percent of respondents indicated all three as a factor. Eighty-six percent indicate that with adequate resources they might consider adding transportation services to their agency.

Eligibility restrictions are clearly one of the barriers to achieving the FTA stated objectives for communities to move away from "silo" transportation systems (single programs designed to serve the needs of only a single population). Funding sources carry specific requirements as to what populations can benefit from those funds. This results in eligibility restrictions being placed on

access to many services even to the point of separating disabled or frail elders clients from attendant caregivers during transport. However, it is not only funding source restrictions that limit combining or sharing of vehicle fleets. Agencies expressed concern about the lack of staff time and resources to coordinate with other agencies stating that financial costs and staffing levels (70 percent) were their highest concerns, followed by liability (61 percent), unique client characteristics (58 percent) or statutory barriers/funding restrictions and insurance concerns (51 percent). Lack of transportation options, or other agencies to coordinate with, were mentioned as issues for rural and tribal agencies who were frequently the sole contact for social service assistance in that area.

Four PAG focus groups discussed barriers identified by the full social service committee and prioritized them for the children/youth, adult, elderly/disabled and homeless/low income human service groups. The highest ranked issues are included in the table below.

CHILDREN/YOUTH	School bus regulatory firewalls/regulatory barriers Routes, esp. in rural areas for non-school activities Funding, low profits Lack of long-term commitments to funding Inconsistent funding , esp. rural areas Young children (7-10) need escort on public transit and/or any distance. Costs with private transport like taxi's/neighbor help
ADULT SERVICES	Lack of dedicated funding/lack of flexibility in funding Lack of experienced/trained drivers Limited access to bus stops in some areas Inadequate infrastructure-public transit and social services Cost of public transportation
ELDERLY/ DISABLED	Finances for clients/agencies inc. insurance costs Knowledge of Options/Isolation Fuel Prices/tight budgets/volunteers unable to donate both time and fuel Over-Capacity - unable to serve all clients in a timely manner Trained Drivers for Special Needs Van Tran/Sun Tran Schedules/scheduling in general
HOMELESS/ LOW INCOME	Costs of transportation for both clients and agencies Limits to public transit network, esp. in rural areas Insurance/fuel costs Schedules not extensive enough for 24/7 job needs

Table 2: Prioritized Transportation Service Barriers.

ARIZONA RIDES VISION STATEMENT

The Arizona Rides Initiative purpose and vision statement is to create "A fully coordinated human services transportation system for the State of Arizona that efficiently and effectively serves all people with special needs transportation, uses all available local, regional and statewide resources, is easy to access, and contributed to a livable community, a vital economy and a healthy environment". *Draft Vision Statement Nov. 13. 2006.*

Four specific goals direct the activities of the Arizona Rides Council:

1. Promote the statewide coordination of special needs transportation;
2. Provide a forum to discuss local, regional and statewide coordinated transportation issues and initiate solutions;
3. Provide oversight and direction to the State's coordinated transportation effort; and
4. Provide the State's Legislature with Arizona Rides outcomes and propose statutory recommendations.

This vision and set of goals were considered throughout the planning process as strategies were developed to address the region's transportation needs. The Arizona Rides coordinator participated in the development of this coordinated plan and during the first six months of 2007 transportation providers and human services agencies met together over shared concerns to develop strategies to improve transportation options for all those with special transportation needs.

POTENTIAL STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS GAPS AND NEEDS

Potential Solutions were developed and discussed by the Social Services Committee and regional transportation providers. Focus groups developed a set of prioritized solutions using concepts identified by the full social service committee for children/youth, adult, elderly/disabled and homeless/low income human service groups.

CHILDREN/YOUTH	Plan for emergency public transportation More flexibility with school buses during down-time for after school transport Increase in all transportation services
ADULT SERVICES	Dedicated statewide funding for rural areas Seamless network for public transportation Large employers subsidize transit passes, provide match dollars Centralized dispatching and scheduling (800#) Increase number of Park and Ride lots
ELDERLY/ DISABLED	Public transportation increases Comprehensive list of options with eligibility criteria/more shared options Mobility Manager/ Central Intake Shared car-pool project (trade in car for credit for trips) Taxi vouchers (with tips included)
HOMELESS/ LOW INCOME	Transit Vouchers Access to insurance/repairs for low income and disabled to keep their vehicles running. Stipends/transportation funding card to low income for maintenance to personal vehicles Seamless network for public transit Additional transit routes for jobs, appointments, services

Table 3: Prioritized Solutions for Regional Transportation Human Service Needs

These priorities, along with other eligible FTA project concepts identified as potential solutions, were then distributed to human service agencies, transportation providers and jurisdictions for ranking and additional discussion. A number of strategies were also proposed and survey respondents indicated that the following to be the most help to them in meeting transportation needs of their agency and clients (in ranked order with 1 being of the most interest and 10 the least).

Increase Fixed Route Services/2.6

Modify Routes to better service clients/3.1

Share information between agencies/3.5

Taxi Vouchers/4.0

One regional clearinghouse for marketing/describing transportation options/4.2

Shared maintenance expenses/4.2

Volunteer opportunities and incentives/mileage reimbursement/4.3

Shared operating expenses/4.3

Insurance pool/4.5

Shared capital expenses/4.5

Car purchase programs/4.5

Shared training opportunities/5.2

Given the clustering of the ranked strategies, it could not be stated that there is a clear preference or even consensus as to what type of strategy that would be most useful to the agencies that responded to the survey. Comments indicate that agencies are fearful of breaking down firewalls between their budgets and responsibilities to donors with shared agreements and they lack the staff time to pursue any options or even to expand activities they all ready do – such as sharing drivers' training. Most indicate, that given the resources, they would expand their own internal fleets and options rather than co-mingle with other agencies in a shared pool. Agencies either direct their clients to find their own transportation options or consider meeting transportation needs to be part of their agencies purpose and service to the client.

Types of transportation assistance identified as being of the most help to agencies (in rank order with 1 being the most appropriate and 10 being the least) were:

Expanded Van Transportation/2.5

Bus Passes/3.2

Transportation Stipends for low income/rural clients/4.1

Gas vouchers/4.6

Taxi vouchers/4.7

Transportation Stipends for volunteers/5.3

Insurance costs (clients or agencies)/5.4

Vehicle maintenance costs (clients or agencies)/5.8

Vehicle registration costs/7.0

Carpooling Incentives/7.1

Other types of assistance noted included: need for female volunteers with listening skills, funds for bicycles, coordinated county-wide system, operating costs and informal on-demand mini-vans for connectors. Both the prioritized strategies and transportation assistance responses reflect similar themes related to expansion of public transit options, desire for direct assistance in the form of bus passes, volunteer mileage reimbursement, or stipends for transportation and indicate that public-private partnerships are seen as part of the regional solution to human service transportation needs. Among the agencies that responded to the regional survey, over 56,000 bus passes were handed out, almost 100 bicycles provided and over 40,000 volunteer rides provided on an annual basis. Providing a mechanism to assist human service agencies to continue and increase these kinds of transportation options was perceived to be of help to meeting clients needs.

GRANT POSSIBILITIES

Three specific FTA programs provide annual funding for implementing the strategies and projects identified by this plan.

Elderly and Persons with Disabilities Transportation Program (5310) :

The Elderly and Persons with Disabilities Transportation Program (5310 Program) assists non-profit agencies in acquiring vehicles to transport elderly and disabled clients. A similar program, the 5311 program, provides similar assistance to public transit programs throughout the state. It is expected that each vehicle will be used for at least 25 hours of client transportation per week. Under this program, agencies can receive up to 80 percent of the cost of a vehicle that will be used for client transportation. Types of vehicles available under this program typically include:

- Maxi-Van with lift and raised roof
- Dual rear wheel cutaway (larger van with lift and raised roof)
- Maxi-Van without lift
- Mini-Van without lift

Program requirements include the following:

- Eligible applicants are nonprofit corporations with IRS 501(c)(3) status. (It is possible for a government to apply if it can certify that no nonprofit agencies in its area are readily available and willing to provide the service.) Indian Nations and Districts within Indian Nations also are eligible applicants.
- Applicants must have available the 20 percent cash match required for the federal funds and an additional 2½ percent match to help fund administrative costs of the state agency (Arizona Department of Transportation) which operates this program.
- Applicants must have funds available to pay all operating and maintenance costs for the vehicle.
- The primary use of the vehicle will be for transportation of the elderly and persons with disabilities.
- The vehicle is titled to the recipient agency, but the Arizona Department of Transportation holds a lien on it. (This lien may be lifted, upon request of the recipient agency, after either four years of use or 100,000 miles.)
- Applicants must offer accessible transportation to their clients. (In practice this means that applicant agencies must have at least one vehicle that is accessible, i.e., equipped with a raised roof and wheelchair lift.)

Job Access and Reverse Commute Formula Grants (5316):

The Job Access and Reverse Commute Program (JARC), provides funding for transportation services for welfare recipients and eligible low-income individuals related to employment related activities. The FY06 allocation for the Tucson area is \$441,408 and estimated allocation for FY07 is \$465,252. Funds may be used for capital expenses with federal funds providing up to 80 percent of the total or operating expenses with federal funds providing up to 50 percent of the total. A designated recipient or the state may use up to 10 percent of the funds for planning, administration and technical assistance. Match for FTA funds may come from other non-DOT federal sources that allow these funds to be used for transportation purposes, such as health and human services.

Eligible recipients include non-profit organizations, state or local governmental authority, and operators of public transportation services including private operators of public transportation services. Successful applicants will be required to assist with necessary data collection and reporting requirements for mandatory status reports to FTA regarding the use of the JARC funds. These responsibilities will be outlined and included in the final contract agreements prior to distribution of awarded grants.

In general, projects and expenses eligible for JARC funding must relate to "the development and maintenance of transportation services designed to transport welfare recipients and eligible low-income individuals to and from jobs and activities related to their employment". Eligible activities for JARC grants include capital, operating and planning expenses of services, equipment, facilities and associated capital maintenance items related to providing access to jobs. Projects of value to the region would include, but not be limited to:

- Developing new or expanded transportation projects or services that provide access to employment opportunities;
- Promoting public transportation by low-income workers, including the use of public transportation by workers with nontraditional work schedules;
- Promoting the use of transit vouchers for welfare recipients and eligible low-income individuals;
- Subsidizing the costs associated with adding reverse commute bus, train, carpool, van routes, or service from urbanized areas and other than urbanized areas to suburban workplaces;

- Subsidizing the purchase or lease by a nonprofit organization or public agency of a van or bus dedicated to shuttling employees from their residences to a suburban workplace; or
- Facilitating public transportation services to suburban employment opportunities.

New Freedom Program (5317):

The New Freedom Program provides funding for public transportation services and alternatives, beyond those required by the ADA, that assist individuals with disabilities. Sixty percent of funds are allocated to urbanized areas and amounts are based on the percent of disabled vs. population of the U.S. as a whole. This program requires a regional competitive process and should coordinate and enhance the 5310 program. The FY06 allocation for the Tucson area is \$196,373 and the estimated FY07 allocation is \$205,986. This program also contains a unique matching provision in that federal funds derived from a social service program can be used to meet the local matching share of project costs.

Eligible recipients include non-profit organizations, state or local governmental authority, and operators of public transportation services including private operators of public transportation services. Successful applicants will be required to assist with necessary data collection and reporting requirements for mandatory status reports to FTA regarding the use of the New Freedom funds. These responsibilities will be outlined and included in the final contract agreements prior to distribution of awarded grants.

Projects and expenses eligible for New Freedom funds must relate in some way to enhancing accessibility and mobility options for persons with disabilities that exceeds or enhances those types of activities mandated by ADA. Eligible activities for New Freedom grants include capital and operating costs of new public transportation services targeted to person with disabilities and public transportation alternatives that go beyond that required by ADA. Projects of value to the region would include, but not be limited to:

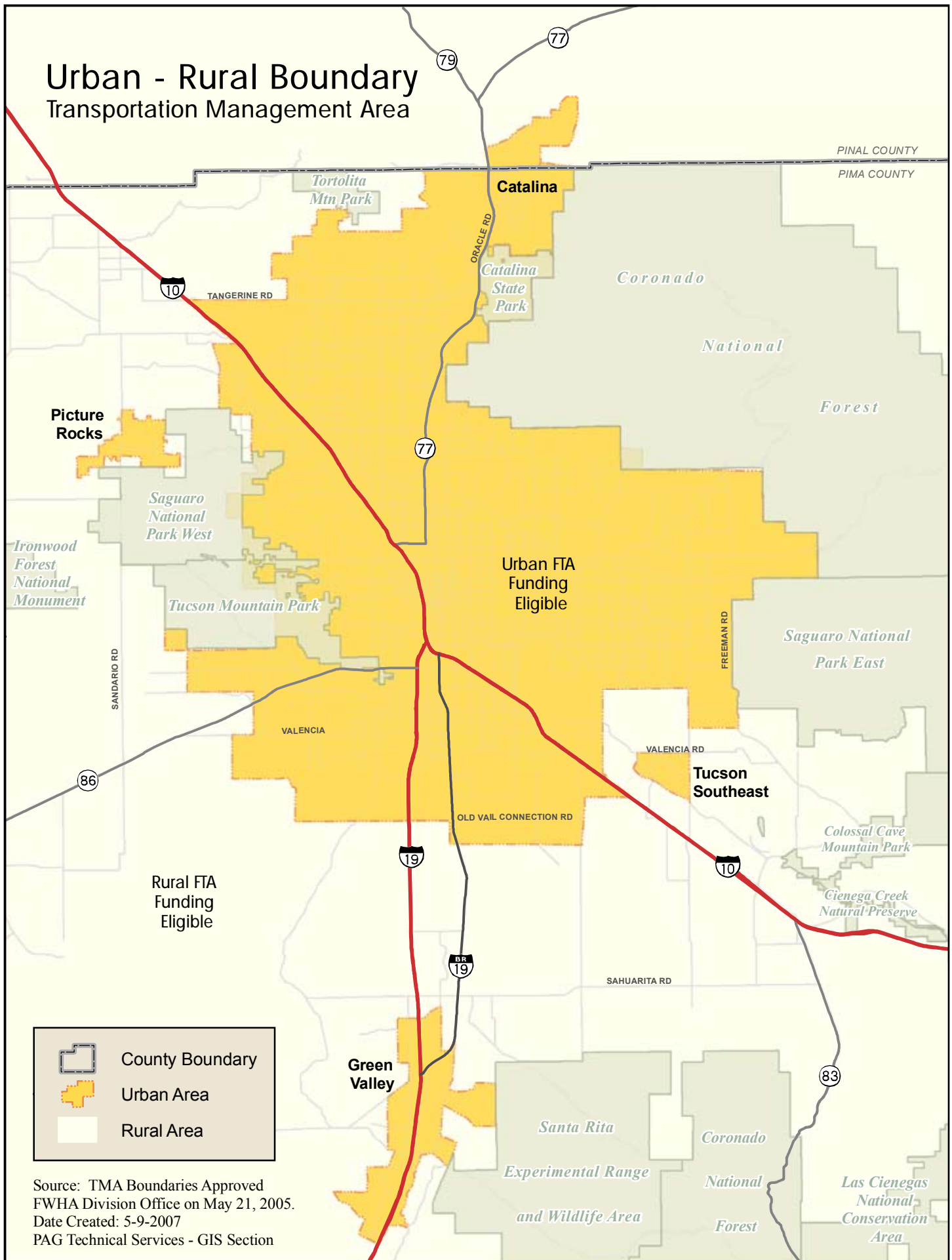
- Purchase of vehicles for transporting persons with disabilities to employment;
- Support accessible taxi, ride-sharing and vanpooling programs;
- Provision of paratransit services beyond the minimum requirements (3/4 mile to either side of a fixed route) including for seasonal routes;
- Make accessibility improvements to transit and intermodal stations not designated as key stations;
- Provide assistance for maintenance and operating costs for lift-equipped vehicles;
- Support volunteer driver and aide programs; or
- Support mobility movement, increase accessibility and improve coordination among public transportation providers and other human service agencies that provide assistance to persons with disabilities.

FTA PROGRAM APPLICATION PROCESS AND TIMELINES

The Federal Transit Authority (FTA) grant programs in this plan each have similar application processes and time-frames. They are not; however, operated concurrently. The 5310 program is coordinated by Arizona Department Transportation with assistance from PAG. Applications are typically available in the early spring with deadlines for submittal typically in March or April. Recommendations are then forwarded to the state for state-level rankings and, based on annual congressional budgets for each fiscal year, awards are identified in the latter part of each year. March amounts are requested at the beginning of each year and then awarded vans purchased and delivered in the summer of each year.

The 5316 and 5317 programs for rural and non-urbanized areas are also coordinated by the Arizona Department Transportation with assistance from PAG. These applications are available in mid to

Urban - Rural Boundary Transportation Management Area



Source: TMA Boundaries Approved
FWHA Division Office on May 21, 2005.
Date Created: 5-9-2007
PAG Technical Services - GIS Section

late spring, with deadlines for submittal typically in April or May. As an annual program, grant awards may be renewed for additional years or new projects identified in future year cycles. The non-urbanized areas of PAG are determined by the boundaries of the Transportation Management Area as designated by the Secretary of Transportation. These boundaries are illustrated in the Transportation Management Area Map approved by the Federal Highway Division Office on March 21, 2005, shown on the previous page.

The 5316 and 5317 programs in the urban area are coordinated by the City of Tucson, as the FTA designated recipient for the Pima County region. The initial applications are anticipated to be available in June of 2007 with awards for eligible projects in mid to late summer. Multi-year awards are anticipated with new projects identified in future year cycles as funding permits.

REGIONAL COORDINATION ACTIVITIES

One universal truth is that there is no one "best" coordination strategy. What may work effectively in one community may not work as well in another. The most effective coordination strategies are those that are not prescriptive, but allow for a range of actions to meet desired results. It is also clear that the preferred coordination efforts in the PAG region are public-private partnerships with agencies directly serving clients with individualized transportation options and the public sector helping to leverage resources with bus and taxi vouchers, increased public transit routes and service times, assistance with capitol, maintenance and operating costs as well as serve as the regional coordinator for information sharing and networking. Over time, formal and informal agreements between human service agencies could increase partnerships for activities such as sharing drivers training, best practices for record keeping and obtaining economies of scale by contracting jointly for routine vehicle maintenance.

Inclusion in the RTP/TIP Processes

Federally mandated long-range transportation plans (RTPs), must have at least a 20-year horizon and be updated every four years. Under the SAFETEA-LU requirements, regional long range plan must now include a regional human service transportation coordination plan (developed with representatives of public, private and nonprofit transportation and human services providers and the public), as well as consider the design and delivery of non-emergency transportation services.

Project strategies eligible for all three FTA grant programs identified in this plan are in PAG's 2030 Regional Transportation Plan adopted on June 29, 2006. As individual projects are identified, these will be included into the ongoing development of the region's short range transportation plan, called the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

CONCLUSION/NEXT STEPS

For successful implementation, several factors must be developed and sustained over time. These include ongoing planning and continual improvement of solutions proposed by this plan. Funding sources to support these actions must be sustainable, continual and dependable over time. Public sector services should supplement, not replace, private sector services and collectively better communication will improve the connections between public transit systems and human service agencies needs.

The 2007 5310 grant process is completed and prioritized rankings have been submitted to ADOT. The rural, non-urbanized 5316 and 5317 grant application deadline was May 1, 2007, and three applications were reviewed and these recommendations also were submitted to ADOT. The 5316 and 5317 grant applications for the urbanized areas of the PAG region are anticipated to be available in June 2007. Multi-year grants are anticipated and future grant applications are expected to run in tandem with the State process for the rural and non-urbanized area in late spring. This

competitive grant process is expected to include a regional review committee consisting of appropriate stakeholders and will be coordinated by the FTA designated recipient for the urbanized area (currently the City of Tucson).

Each of these three FTA programs, as annual programs, will continue to provide a funding source for public transit systems and non-profit agencies to enhance their ability to meet the multi-faceted needs of the low income workers, elderly and persons with disabilities in our community. Broad community support, combined with the commitment of regional transportation service providers, will ultimately have a positive impact on people and resources as communication and collaboration results in additional transportation options in the PAG region.

PARTICIPATING AGENCIES

Providers of human service and transportation services were invited to participate in the process to develop this plan. Broad participation from the general public was solicited through a regional survey and meetings provided during the plan development. A Public Notice was published on April 20-21, 2007, providing notice of the pending adoption of the Coordinated Plan. The preliminary draft plan was reviewed by PAG region committees and the full Social Services Committee at their May 14, 2007, meeting. A regional Open House also was held on May 14, 2007, along with distribution of the draft plan to regional human service agencies for review and comment. Specific strategies proposed in this plan are consistent with input received from PAG member jurisdictions and these stakeholder groups.

The following agencies and member jurisdiction departments participated in one or more activities related to the Coordinated Plan development and review.

Alzheimer's Association	Intermountain Center for Human Development	Sun Tran
Arizona Youth Partnership	Jewish Family & Children's Service (JFCS)	The Haven
Arizona Children's Assn/Las Familias	La Frontera Center	Hope of Glory Ministries
Arts for All, Inc.	Lend a Hand	Interfaith Community Services
Beacon Group	Make Way for Books	Information & Referral Services
Blake Foundation/Community Living Services	Metropolitan Education Commission	The Primavera Foundation
Blake Foundation/Sage	Metropolitan Housing Corporation	Project PEPP
Boys & Girls Clubs of Tucson	Northwest Fire District	Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA)
Catholic Community Services	Office of Supervisor Sharon Bronson	Southern Arizona Association for the Visually Impaired (SAAVI)
Catholic Social Services	Open Inn, Inc	Southern Arizona Legal Services
Child and Family Resources	Our Family Services	Salvation Army Senior Center
CODAC Behavioral Health Services, Inc	Parent Aid Child Abuse Prevention Center	St. Christopher's Parish
Comin' Home	Pascua Yaqui Tribe	Tohono O'odham Nation
Compass Health Center	Pima Council on the Aging	Town of Oro Valley, Transit
Comstock Children's Foundation	People, Resources and Organizations in Support of Neighborhoods (PRO Neighborhoods)	Tucson Planning Council for the Homeless
Community Outreach Program for the Deaf	Pima County DOT	Tucson Youth Development
Direct Center for Independence	Senior Companion Program (Our Family)	United Community Health Center
Drexel Heights Fire District	St. Elizabeth's of Hungary Health Center	United Way
El Pueblo Health Center		University of Arizona/Parking & Transportation Services
El Rio Health Center		Volunteer Center of Southern Arizona
Handi Dogs, Inc.		
Interfaith Community Services		



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